



November 17, 2005

The Honorable
United States Senator/House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510/20515

Dear :

I am deeply disturbed that the so-called compromise agreement reached between House and Senate conferees on Patriot Act reauthorization does not represent a compromise but rather a capitulation to an administration that has twisted arms to avoid common sense improvements to protect Americans' civil liberties.

This is most disturbing in light of revelations made in the past few weeks about the FBI's excessive use of National Security Letters (NSLs) and violations of intelligence rules, previously unknown. Until recently, Congress, the media and the public had been kept in the dark about just how extensively these abusive powers were being used by the administration. In fact, the American people were told by the administration that there were no abuses. However, we learned recently from the print media that since Congress expanded the FBI's power to issue NSLs in the 2001 Patriot Act, more than 30,000 NSLs a year have been issued by the government, granting the FBI wide access to individuals' private records without judicial approval.

In addition, just prior to that revelation, the FBI's own general counsel revealed that in the past three years, there have been at least 230 violations of the laws governing secret surveillance, including 13 involving expiring Patriot Act provisions.

This information should have been uncovered by the oversight committees earlier and been part of the public debate on this legislation.

The conference report fails to include any meaningful modifications to controversial records search provisions and makes the NSL provision even more abusive of Americans' civil liberties and more intrusive into their private lives.

We urge you to reject this so-called compromise bill and pass legislation that addresses the public's justified and growing concerns about FBI access to their most private information.

Sincerely,

Bob Barr, Chairman, Patriots to Restore Checks and Balances

American Conservative Union

Liberty Coalition

Gun Owners of America

Second Amendment Foundation

Association of American Physicians and Surgeons

Stephen M. Lilienthal, Free Congress Foundation

Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms

American Civil Liberties Union